The Bachelor's Ball.

Look at them well,
See how they swell,
Handsome and homely, but little and small.
Loudly they talk,
Proudly they walk—
See the old boys at the bachelors' ball!

Men without wives,
Gracious, what lives
Fellows must lead with no helpmeets to cheer!
Buttonless shirts,
Conscienceless flirts,
Homeless and childless, their lots must be drear!

No baby's smile
Their hearts beguile,
For to such favors their feelings are cold;
Though they seem gay,
Wretched are they—
Who will take care of them when they are old?

Leap-year is here;
Have they no fear
That widows and maids will arise and propose?
Fie on the maid
Who says she's afraid
To capture and subjugate one of those beaus!

There is no hope,
Give them free scope—
Sooner or later they'll go to the wall.
Vainly they'll prance,
Frolic and dance,
The bald-headed boys at the bachelors' ball!

"THE LONG PACK."

High up among the hills, on the wagon road that runs through the Cascita pass, is a small tavern, much frequented by commercial travelers, and which bears the odd title of "The Long Pack."

"Does that mean a long pack of cards?" inquired a traveler, glancing at the swinging signboard, which also represented the weather-worn picture of something faintly resembling a soldier's overgrown knapsack.

"No," replied the gray-haired landlord. "It means a peddler's pack. Nowadays they call them sample cases, I believe," pointing to the baggage of several commercial drummers that stood in a corner. "You see I have a good deal of that sort of custom. I try to make the 'road boys' as comfortable as possible, for I was a little too hard on their fraternity once."

"How was that?"

"Well," said the mountain Boniface, who had waited until his daughter, a buxom matron, had left the room, "it ain't a very pleasant story, but I like to tell it sometimes, just to remind myself that the worst thing a man can have in this world is a hot, obstinate temper. You see, I came to this coast soon after the gold fever broke out, and settled down in the Santa Barbara valley, below here, ranching. I was a widower even then, and had brought with me from the states my only child—a daughter, past seventeen. She was a pretty girl, if I do say it, and being as good as pretty, you can imagine I was quite wrapped up in her. Of course, I was anxious to keep her with me, and if not that, at least I looked for her to do something better that fall in love with a peddler."

"And did she?"

"Yes; you see, in those days, the country was full of young fellows who had struck out for themselves, and were trying to get a start by carrying knick-knacks around from one mining camp to another. Some of them were lively chaps enough and well educated, but I was fresh from the states with all the eastern prejudices, and it almost drove me wild when Nellie told me she wanted to marry a young fellow who brought his pack through our district a good deal oftener than the trade seemed to require. I was a hot-tempered fool in those days, so I stormed, threatened, locked Nellie up for a week, and sent word to her lover that I had loaded my gun for wild-cats and peddlers."

"What did Nellie do?"

"You might have guessed it, stranger. One day when I came back from a cattle sale she was missing. I chased her a couple of days, but they had taken to the tall timber and it was no use. After a while I got a letter from 'Frisco, and I wrote back saying that I disowned her, and that he had better keep out of the range of my dear rifle."

"What did you do then?"

"Suffered, mister—just suffered. I knew I was wrong, but I'd have died rather than give in. For four years I lived like a toad in a rock, hating the whole world. All the pleasure I had was watching for peddlers. The number I chased off the ranch during that time would astonished you. One evening, after a terrible rainstorm, one of the tribe came to my house and asked for shelter for the night. He was a thin, weak looking fellow, with his face covered by a huge ragged beard. He carried on his back an enormously long and heavy pack, and seemed so exhausted with his tramp through the mire that I hadn't the heart to do more than order him off the place."

"That was pretty hard," said the listener.

"I suppose it was. The peddler seemed all broke up when he found I wouldn't even give him a bunch of straw in the stable, and no other house within twelve miles. Instead of complaining, however, he merely begged that I would let him leave his pack, which he said contained goods of value, under shelter from the rain. I finally consented to this. So, as I had sworn one of his trade should never cross my threshold, I carried his pack inside, while its owner limped off to crawl under some bush or other."

"Didn't you feel mean?"

"Yes; mean and bitter at the same time, for something about the man reminded me of Nellie's husband a little. However, I locked and barred all the doors and windows, as usual, for some road agents had been around those parts about that time, and had stood up and robbed several ranchers; and, as I told you, I was all alone. Somehow I couldn't go to sleep when, after that, I went to bed. After tossing around for awhile, I got up and sat by the fire, brooding over my trouble, and trying not to think of the poor devil shivering out there in the cold and rain somewhere. I looked at his pack sitting up in the corner, and wondered what made it so long. As I watched it I fancied I saw it move."

"Saw it move?"

"Exactly, I wouldn't believe my eyes at first, but after watching intently for a while, I distinctly saw the front of a hand pressed against the canvas from the inside. Like a flash then I understood the whole thing. The peddler was one of the road agent's gang, and, knowing I had considerable money about the house, they had adopted that plan for smuggling one of their crew inside the house. After I had gone to sleep, the fellow inside could let in the rest and finish the job. I walked quietly across the room, took my gun from the antlers, knelt down a few feet from the pack, aimed square in the center and pulled the trigger."

"Go on," murmured the listener, with a shudder.

"But the gun didn't go off," continued the landlord, clearing his throat. "The nipple was rusty and wouldn't work, so I laid down the rifle and got an ax from the kitchen. It had been newly ground that day, and when I lifted it over my head, I counted upon cleaving that pack, robber and all, clear to the floor. Just as I raised the ax and braced myself for the blow, I—I saw a ghost."

"A ghost?"

"Yes, sir. The pack opened, and I saw sticking out of its top the curly yellow head, blue eyes and rosy cheeks of my Nellie when she was a little tot of four. The shock staggered me so that I sank on my knees. I wiped my eyes, and wondered if I had gone crazy, I was almost certain of it, when the ghost stretched out a pair of chubby white arms, and said:

"'Deevnin, drandpa!'"

"Ah!" said the guest, with a relieved sigh, "I begin to see. And what did you do then?"

"I don't exactly know," said the landlord, softly, "but if there is anything that will bend a stiff, stubborn neck quicker than the arms of a little child, I'd like to know what it is. I put the tired little prisoner down by the fire, opened the door and held out my arms."

"And the mother——"

"Yes," nodded the landlord, "they were both there; and, mister, I guess that's the end of my story," and the old man wiped his eyes. "You must excuse me, stranger, but that was a wet evening, and somehow I haven't got quite dry since."

Rupert's Love.

"Oh, darling, must I leave thee now?"

As these words fell like molten drops of lead, a look of deep pain flashed across Rupert Melville's Chicago countenance.

"Oh, Rupy, and must you leave me?" passionately querried the lovely thirty-five-year old, laying her blushing face on his coat sleeve, and leaving signs that would leave people to think that he'd been drunk and had fallen into a lime barrel.

"Indeed I must, dearest," he fondly answered, bracing himself against the mantlepiece for the final plunge, while his loving eyes counted the freckles on her nose, "I must flee from here, sweet one, and seek some foreign port, where, unknown to all, I may begin a new life."

As the manly fellow spoke these words, his form shook from the weight of woe and that of his loving companion.

"Where do you think of going?" she asked, childishly toying with his grass watch chain.

"I had thought of Griffin," he responded.

"Why do you leave our fair city for Griffin?" she demanded, a jealous look flashing from her eyes.

"Because," he faltered, "because—oh, darling, can you stand it?"

"I can and will," she answered firmly.

Then, with a demoniac glare lighting up his long cut features, Rupert Melville hissed:

"Because the saloons have quit making nickle plates of ice cream."

Thought So, Too.

In response to a sign of "Boy Wanted" a lad about twelve years of age applied for a position in a Michigan avenue store. The proprietor liked his looks and decided to take him, and, after some general explanations and observations, asked:

"What is your first name?"

"Henry."

"Very well; I shall call you by that."

"What is your first name?" asked the boy.

"Why?"

"Oh, I think it's altogether the best plan to call each other by our first names. It saves time, and you don't get folks mixed up. You can call me Hank, and if your name's William I can shorten it half a rod."

The boy hasn't begun work yet. In fact, the man has installed a lad in the place who takes plenty of time to „Mister" him and gives the full name.

Legal Advice.

Two Dutchmen, who built and used in common a small bridge over a stream which ran through their farms, had a dispute concerning some repairs which it needed, and one of them postively refused to bear any of the expence necessary to purchase a few planks.

Finally the aggrieved party went to a neighboring lawyer, and placing ten dollars in his hand, said:

"I'll give you all dish moneyes if you'll make Hans do justice mit de pridge."

"How much will it cost to repair it?" asked the honest lawyer.

"Not more ash five tollar," replied the Dutchman.

"Very well," replied the lawyer, pocketing one of the notes and giving him the other. "Take this and go get the bridge repaired, 'tis the best course you can take."

"Yaas," said the Dutchman, slowly, "yas, dat ish more better as to quarrel mit Hans." But as he went along home he shook his head frequently, as if unable, after all, see to quite clearly how he had gained anything by going to law.

Rules of the Wash House.

"Say, you yaller-skined Chinee, I left two flannel shirts an' a pair o' overalls here to be washed t'other day, an' when I sent my boy around to get 'em and tell yer I'd lost the check yer said 'no checky no washy' to 'em."

"No checkee, no washee. Dlat allee lite, me no yallee-skin. Me Chinee man. Me lun washee hou e. No checkee, no washee."—

"Then I'll smash your mug all over your face," and the irate partron of Tung Lung began to work his arms. A moment later he was so mixed up with a Chinaman that he could hardly tell which was which. He got an awful threshing, and when he came out of that laundry with one ear partly bitten off, and with his nose bashfully retiring from view with face, with one eye hanging down on his cheek and the other closed for repairs, he mournfully said to a man who asked him what ailed him;

"Ther rule 'o that wash house air 'No checky, no wash,' an' I'm dad gummed if they don't enforce it."

Without Argument.

He was a young lawyer, and was delivering his maiden speech. Like most young lawyers, he was florid, rhetorical, scattering and weary. For four weary hours he talked at the court and the jury, until everything felt like lynching him. When he got through, his opponent, a grizzled old professional, arose, looked sweetly at the judge, and said:

"Your honor, I will follow the example of my young friend who has just finished, and submit the case without argument."

Then he sat down, and the silence was large and oppressive.

A Keen Reminder.

"There isn't a button on this shirt," dismally observed the young husband shaking the garment before his wife's eyes.

"I'm sorry, my love; it might have been remidied if I had had the time."

"Why, you have got nothing to do. What do you mean by saying if you had time?"

"I mean that if there had been no occasion for me to trim over a last spring bonnet for this spring's wear I would have had time to look after your clothes."

"Now, my dear," said the candidate's wife: "I don't wish to throw the slightest obstacle in the way of your election, and if you choose to turn the house into a beer-garden, and have all the loafers in town tramping on my carpets and filling my curtains with pipe-smoke and drinking whiskey out of my best tea-cups, I shan't say a word. But I want you to understand that if another of those women's rights delegations comes to know if you are going to take a manly stand for down-trodden womanhood—well, that delegation has got to be twenty years older and keep its vail down, or I'll interview it myself. That's all, dear."

It requires nerve to edit a newspaper out West, as the experience of "one of them fellers," as told by himself, will show:

"One evening—it was moonlight, in the summer time—we sat alone on the porch by the cottage door, holding that little white hand in a gentle pressure; one arm had stolen round her waist, and a silent song of joy, 'like the music of the night,' was on our soul. Our lips met in a sweet delicious kiss, and bending softly to her ear, we whispered a tale of passionate devotion—we proposed. In a moment she tore her hand from ours, and with a look of ineffable scorn, said, 'What! marry an editor? You git out!' We slid."

"La me!" sighed Mrs. Partington, "here I have been suffering the bigamies of death for three mortal weeks. First I was seized with a bleeding phrenology in the left hampshire of the brain, which was exceeded by a stoppage of the left ventilator of the heart. This gave me an inflammation in the borax, and now I'm sick with the chloroform morbus. There's no blessin' like that of health, particularly when you're ill."